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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Written statement*/ submitted by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[12 January 2001]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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WFDY MISSION TO PALESTINE

Horrible Experiences of Israeli Aggression against Palestinian Civilians

A 10-member delegation of World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) visited Palestine and Israel from 2-6 November 2000. The delegation was composed of Cyprus (EDON), Brazil (JR8), France (MJCF), Greece (KNE), Italy (Giovani Comunisti), South Africa (ANC-YL) and WFDY's Secretariat.

A delegation of Asian Students Associations also visited Palestine during the same time. The delegation had the opportunity to visit Gaza, Ramallah, Hebron, Neblus and Nezerth where the brutal aggression of the Israeli Armed Forces is committed against the Palestinian civilians including children. The delegation witnessed the manner in which the Israeli Armed Forces are using highly sophisticated weapons against the Palestinian civilian including youth and children.

The delegation eye witnessed the Israeli Army helicopters launched missiles attacks against civil residential areas in Ramallah on the pretext of destroying Al-Fateh offices. These offices are located in the city, where civilian Palestinians are living.

The delegation also visited the General Hospital in Neblus and met the Director General of the hospital. He informed the delegation that there were 365 injured people brought in the hospital. Among them 30 people have since died. Vast majority of those killed were hit by Israeli Army on the upper part of the body like chest, neck and head. Among the people brought in the hospital, 80 were below the age of 18. This is clearly reflects the volume of excessive force used by the Israeli Army against Palestinian civilians. The Delegation collected samples of the ammunition, which were operated from the bodies. The ammunition includes highly powerful explosives. It was documented that typical "butterfly" bullets were used against the civilians. Beside its highly killing ability, if it did not kill then this kind of bullets could paralyze the human person for the rest of his life.

The delegation witnessed the brutal massacres carried out by the Israeli Armed Forces against Palestine civilians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and inside Israel. Israel has dangerously increased the level of aggression in an unprecedented way. Till now 250 Palestinians were killed and more than 10000 are seriously wounded, among them 500 feared to be paralysed for all life, by the belligerent Israeli Armed Forces all over Palestine and inside Israel. Everyday the Palestinian bury the bodies of their killed people and especially youth and children.

The delegation witnessed that the Israeli Forces are clearly using excessive force against the Palestinians civilians. The delegation witnessed that the Israeli Army shoot at the chest, neck and head of the Palestinian children, just few meters away from the venue where the delegation was located. We were shocked to see the arbitrary shooting of civilian targets which cannot be justified and against all laws and cannons of civilized life. As the conflict is between civilian Palestinians and organized forces, it was clear that there was no danger to any little extent to the life of the Israeli soldiers. They are using sniper rifles from a long distance, where it was not possible to throw a stone on them. These boys who were there in Nablus and Ramallah could not reach with stones, in any case, at the Israeli soldiers. There is clear evidence that the use of certain weapons against the Palestinian civilians including that of children and non-military buildings is totally out of proportion with the capacity of its victims to retaliate. The shelling of the houses as well as the use of assault helicopters to attack civilians using a whole range of weapons is a clear evidence of this brutality.

The delegation has visited the Civil Hospital in Gaza, where the same story was repeated. The Hospital was over crowded with the injured, many of them seriously, who were the victims of the clear excessive use of force, by hitting the people, including children on their upper part of body, including that of chest, neck and head. Many among them are feared to be paralyzed for all life, according to the expert opinion of doctors treating them in the hospital. The delegation also visited the spot where the 12-year old Mohammad Al-Durrah from Al-Bureij Refugee Camp in Gaza Strip was savagely killed by the Israeli soldiers.

Delegation visited the city of Nezreth, in Israel, where it met with the Mayor of the city, who informed that the Israeli Police have opened fire on peaceful demonstration opposing the killings of Palestinian civilians carried out by the Israeli Army. Police and security forces interfered using automatic weapons and killed 5 people. The delegation also visited one family, whose young son Ezad was killed by Israeli police.

In the light of the above said facts witnessed by the delegation during its visit to the places of confrontation, homes and families of victims killed by Israeli soldiers as well as meetings with various civil society and human rights organizations in Palestine and Israel, we conclude that the situation arising out of the aggression by Israeli Army against the Palestinian civilians is highly dangerous. The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) affirmed as the following:

1. To deploy the International Protection Force to save the lives of the Palestinian civilians from the brutal aggression of Israeli Army.
2. To halt immediately all military operations and killings of Palestinian civilians carried out by the Israeli Armed Forces.
3. Israel should immediately withdraw all its Armed Forces from the areas controlled by Palestinian National Authority, which is a immediate cause of provocation.
4. WFDY calls upon the international public opinion, civil society organizations and individuals all over the world to exert pressure upon their governments to stop their incriminating silence and fulfil their legal and moral obligations towards the Palestinian people by signing protest letters and petitions to the Prime Minister of Israel, UN Secretary General and to the Chiefs of the Embassies/Missions of Israel.
5. WFDY calls on the United Nations along with other members of the international community to form a commission to thoroughly investigate the brutalities committed by the Israeli Armed Forces of against the Palestinian civilians.

WFDY calls upon all its member and friendly organizations, human rights organizations and all the democratic and progressive forces to come forward and express their solidarity with the people of Palestine, strongly condemn Israel for committing crimes against humanity and for the aggression against Palestinian civilians and to demand Israeli government to immediately stop this aggression.